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name, and are kept at present in a village beside the bush in which the last three rulers lie buried. Their keeper is a descendant of Malegudu, eldest son of Mugɔdɔ, who fought with Mujaji for the throne. These drums are not to be seen by the public, nor are people, except inmates of the royal district, supposed to pass anywhere near there. In appearance and decoration they are no different from ordinary drums, but they are made in a special way and it is said that the maker 'will see them with his eyes but never hear them with his ears' (i.e. he will be put to death when his work is done). The largest is *phaṭaṭɛ*, which stands about 4 ft. high; next in size is *ʃaŋga*; then comes *pekahare*; while the smallest and most important of all is *raŋwedi*, to which is attributed powers even of locomotion, because in 1892, when Albasini set fire to the royal village, it was the only one of the *gomana* drums that was not burnt. While all four *gomana* drums are said to contain a human skull instead of the stone that one usually finds inside it, *raŋwedi*, the smallest, has the facial skin of a human being placed (in strips, it is said) under the resonator of ox hide and has, smeared on the outside, the body dirt of the person (said to be always a chief councillor or other important person of royal blood) killed for its manufacture. This drum is thought to be closely associated with the welfare of the tribe. Should the chief have occasion to escape from enemies, she should take with her this drum, and it is said that, when the heir to the throne receives instruction in the use of rain medicines just prior to the death of the ruling chief, she must be sitting upon it. In some of the neighbouring tribes the sacred drums are pierced on the death of the chief.

The care of these sacred drums, involving periodic smearing with fat and ochre to keep out weevils and moths, renewal of the skin resonators, building and repair of the hut in which they are kept, is the work of a special section of people, those of Ravothata, whose totem is *ɖou* of Vulebye. Vulebye is in Phalaborwa, where this drum cult is much stronger than among the Lovedu. These Ravothata are also responsible for closing the *vyali* initiation at the capital when they come at its end with their weird-costumed dancing performers, the *magɔgɔbya*. Thus once again the *gomana* and the *vyali-vuhwera* are linked into a common complex. The sacred drums, played only on special ceremonial occasions and by men, not women, who are usually responsible for drumming, are looked upon as gods (*vadimo*). The praise of *phaṭaṭɛ*, the largest, is 'Leg of *phaṭaṭɛ* of Muhale [the old chief]; if it is not a god we can throw it away rattling to the pool' (*Goto la phaṭaṭɛ a Muhale hɛ yga ve a se mudimo re ga laṭa re khogolosa ra isa madivoni*). The Thavina and Nareni, tribes to the south of the Lovedu, offer to the sacred drums the first-fruits, and everywhere their beating is associated with rain and the agricultural year. Not only are the drums gods, but their sound is thought to be very pleasing to the *ʂwiɖaʃani*, those ancestral spirits who, when the drums are sounded, come and sing and dance. The knowledge that their part is played by initiated men does not appear to detract from their importance in the eyes of those who are in the secret. The instrument used consisted in the old days of the tibia of a human being with a feather inserted (and there is reason to believe that some of these are still extant) but to-day

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they use mostly two pieces of wood slightly concave on the inside in which a piece of sinew or reed is temporarily inserted. The language being tone-bound, messages and songs can be understood when whistled. Not all ancestral spirits, but only those of the Lovedu proper and of some of the important groups, such as the Khaha and Nareni, are thought to be able to visit the earth as *zwiḍajani*.

The most important feature of the drum cult was the beating of the sacred drums in an enclosure near the village, usually in the afternoon and evening on six successive days twice every year: in the spring just before the sowing and in winter after the harvest thanksgiving. The spring drumming was preceded by propitiation of the royal ancestors by means of a libation on their graves in Ḍaja Forest, where the earlier chiefs lie buried. There was a special procession which no one was to see on pain of death, the Mulodozi River had to be crossed at a special spot called *Khiṭaba-vakɔlɔlɔ* (washing place of great people) and it is maintained by some that a black ox was also slaughtered. The district head at Ḍaja, who was responsible for clearing a way to the graves, had to plant near the royal graves a little of every seed cultivated. The people would then see, it is said, which grew best and would plant much of that. The *gomana*, the beating of the sacred drums, 'was the chief thing that had the power of asking rain from the ancestors'. The sounding of the drums at harvest-time was a thanksgiving. The first harvest *gomana* after the circumcision took the form of an initiation, in which the neophytes were introduced into the drum ritual and the secret of *zwiḍajani*, and received cuts on their faces as a sign that they had passed through it.

Though the sacred drums are still kept and the Ravothaṭa people are still called to repair the hut in which they are placed, the regular beating of *gomana* drums has fallen into disuse. The last *gomana* initiation held officially by the queen in the tribe was in 1892, just before the accession of the present queen. It is difficult to account for this lapse when among neighbouring tribes the cult is still fully carried out. Some say the reason lies in the ritual murders that are associated with the drums, but since it is an accepted principle that a sheep may satisfactorily take the place of a human being and, moreover, this difficulty must somehow have been overcome in other tribes, this reason does not appear good enough. Possibly the cult was introduced from the south and had not become sufficiently assimilated or taken deep enough root to survive the lethargy induced by European contact. Perhaps the rain-making powers of the queen herself made it largely unnecessary. It is not impossible that it will suddenly spring back to life, as did the *vyali* in 1938–9 after a lapse of over thirty years.

Though the queen herself now holds no *gomana*, the institution is not dead. Elements such as *zwiḍajani* have taken permanent root and the queen has allowed a stranger, Rasekwalo, a rain doctor of the *kwena* totem who came to live on European-owned land under her jurisdiction, to hold a *gomana* with, of course, his own drums, and in 1929, when he came to ask that boys from the royal village should be allowed to attend the initiation, she gave her consent. He holds one *gomana* a year, receiving

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Though made by men or women, there is something almost supernatural about a *gɔma*: its manufacture is called 'giving birth to' (*hu dzwala digɔma*) and though, for example, in the case of a dancing *gɔma*, every one knows that some person is playing the part, this in no way detracts from its importance. Many of the *digɔma* are masked figures in costumes made of grass, reeds, or leaves. Some are mummeries with a meaning attached; others are simply interesting or wonderful objects. One *gɔma*, *dau* (lion), consists of a sound made by passing the hand down a stick on a piece of hide held over a pot. These *digɔma* are traditional in initiations, but very often new ones are invented and, since different regiments or areas come on many ceremonial occasions with their own *digɔma*, there may be a mild competitive element in the showing of *digɔma*, especially in *khɔba* and *vyali*. Laws taught in initiation ceremonial are also referred to as *digɔma*. But the greatest of all *digɔma* are the *gomana* drums, which are looked upon as gods and are associated with the ancestors and religious ritual. *Digɔma* vary from laws or mummeries to semi-gods. The element of awe, so conspicuously absent in Lovedu religious practices, is found in their attitude towards *digɔma*—not that there is any display of awe towards them or in their presence, but that in referring to some of them people talk as though of something awesome or god-like. Even the *zwidjani*, ancestral spirits, who come to earth when *gomana* drums are played or at religious ceremonies, are thought of as *digɔma*, which in this manner become part of religion itself.

The greatest *gɔma* of the *vyali* is *khiudogani* or *khiudogala*, referred to also as the great Bird of Muhale or of Rhodesia who, like most *digɔma*, is believed to come from a pool in the river. It is a *gɔma* of the men and manifests itself only when there is moonlight, returning, it is said, to its pool when the moon is dark. But it is always there, secreted in its enclosure. The girls have to sing whether it is there or not, and often, though the moon is dark, it whistles its directions and commands. It consists of a light, semicircular framework about 4 ft. high, over which are put strings of the *muga* thorn tree (*Acacia rehmanniana*), which have been placed in water to become black. Surmounting it all is a small head crowned with an ostrich or other feather. It is seen only occasionally, when it comes dancing into the *vyali* courtyard at night, and, in spite of bright moonlight, its black colour makes it difficult to discern it clearly. It speaks and sings by whistling through an instrument similar to, but larger than, that used by *zwidjani*, made of the leg-bone of cattle.

This Bird is the ruling spirit of the *vyali*. It has many praises used by the girls in its honour. Coming as it does when the green foods of summer are being eaten and the grass is long, it is the embodiment of plenty and has daily to receive from each initiate summer foods and beer. All the time it is there every one in the area who makes beer has to bring one calabash to its enclosure. If this is not observed the person may be fined. The Bird regulates the whole procedure of the *vyali*, ordering which songs have to be sung, telling the girls when to dance, when to stop singing, what to do. At times it even gets angry and then, if it is dancing, it may stamp out the courtyard fires. Any infringement of the rules of the school are referred to as 'breaking the ribs' (*hu rɔva letagori*)

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833 753 *ɖɛre* if the circumstances of the personal relations of the patient justify such a diagnosis. People thought that Maḍaradani's cough was *ɖɛre*, but when he insisted that he had no lovers it was diagnosed as *khileso*; Mulada's debility was probably due to chronic malaria, but his friends suspected that he had taken no precautionary measures before resuming co-habitation with his wife, who had miscarried after seven months. *Ɖɛre* is distinguished from *lefiha* (consumption) by its rapid course and the fact that *lefiha* (*hu fiha*, to breathe) is not caused by women. *Ɖɛre* [847] can be cured only in its earliest stages, an ingredient of the medicine being a portion of the abortion or, in the case of intercourse with a woman who has lost a child, can be prevented by steaming and mutual inoculation. The prevalence of *ɖɛre* suggests that abortions are common and that effective abortifacients are in general use. In reality, however, innocent women are accused as soon as a lover falls ill, and rather than be thought murderers, they often give him medicine purporting to be a portion of the abortion mixed with sand to be used as a cure.

753 769 Disease and healing are in the last resort connected with the guardianship of the ancestors. If they are annoyed and relax their vigilance, their descendants may be rendered susceptible to disease, or medicines used cannot have their full effect. Ancestors, however, do not merely ward off disease or assist cure; they also actively cause illness. The crying all day of a baby may be due to the spirit of a grandfather pinching it in order that it should be given his name; sore eyes in children are often, and in adults sometimes, attributed to ancestors; barrenness or difficult birth is laid at their door, and sometimes they seize the whole body of a person because they wish to 'possess' him. But ancestors never cause death: even if at first an illness is said to be due to them, should death supervene, it is attributed to witches. Complaints of living relatives, especially of the father's sister, may also cause illness.

754 By far the most important of all causes of ill-health, however, is the evil work of witches and sorcerers. Certain illnesses, such as *khileso*, are characteristic of sorcery and can be contracted in no other manner. But any disease may be caused by witchcraft and witches may avail themselves of the opportunity offered by any minor illness to enter and aggravate it. Diagnosis depends on the course of the illness. Dysentery is regarded as due to natural causes; but should it not respond to treatment or should the patient suspect an enemy, a witch will be implicated. During the 1938 smallpox epidemic, the head of a district which was more hardly hit than its neighbours called a meeting of residents. Men declared, 'Smallpox kills people here; they merely get ill and recover elsewhere. There is a witch in our midst.' Money was collected, three men sent to a diviner, and, in the end, two women were accused. A specialized cause of illness is legitimate vengeance-magic used against theft and called *khidɔba*, which makes the finger of the thief swell up or the stolen goat bleat in his belly.

753 It must not be imagined that the Lovedu do not recognize a large number of diseases as natural. Many illnesses 'just come'. Such are all minor ailments like coughs, colds, stomach disorders, and also other more serious diseases like dysentery and malaria. Too much beer is

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known to affect the stomach, many kinds of spinach to cause diarrhoea. Epidemics of smallpox, measles, coughs are thought to be brought by 'wind' (*phɛfo e ɖile*) and steps may be taken to combat them by sprinkling with medicines the inmates of the village. Usually an epidemic 'just comes', but on occasion one hears that a witch has 'sent' the wind. Ancestors, too, are thought to exercise some controlling influence over wind; in most libations they are asked, 'Prevent for us these winds'—that is, as we might phrase it in our prayers, 'Guard us from disease.' Diseases are never classified as natural or non-natural solely according to their nature or symptoms. Any natural illness may also be 'sent' and, though natural death is recognized as possible, in practice those closely affected always attribute death to witchcraft or sorcery, though outsiders may give other reasons and some even say of an old man dying, 'The gods have called him to rest.' Of the thirty deaths, including a number of old people, that came to our notice, none were, however, thought to be natural. Contagiousness (*hu ʃɛɖɛla*) of certain diseases, such as venereal diseases, leprosy, whooping cough, measles, is recognized, and it is known that consumption may be transmitted by parents to their children, as one of its names, *lehɔpɔla la tata-mulɔgɔ* (cough of the family father) signifies.

There must, of course, be a body of professional men and women trained in and practising the art and science of medicine, but there are also many who have an extensive knowledge of home remedies. This is not unexpected in a society in which ordinary mortals live close to, and know a great deal about, nature. Every one is familiar with plants and their properties, which is one of the bases of pharmacology, with the meagre conceptions of anatomy and physiological relations, and with much of the intricate system of causation of disease. There are many men and women who know some special medicines or types of treatment, inherited usually from father, mother, or spouse, and kept secret, not because the knowledge is a source of material benefit, for the remedies are generally given free, but because it lends some recognition and prestige. Mamutho, despite all our efforts, divulged her medicine for inflamed eyes to us only as a parting gift. Madinji treats sprains and fractures; Khiɛbɛ specializes in mutual inoculation of the newly wed; and Khapani knows roots for dysentery. These are herbalists, not doctors, but some herbalists are so well-known for the efficacy of a medicine they have that even diviners send patients to them. Knowledge of these remedies, however important, does not make one a doctor (*Ɖaga*): that appellation is accorded only to those who are initiated bone-throwers or as herbalists have achieved general recognition as dispensers of many medicines and treatments. Muhale's wife, though no bone-thrower, is a good midwife and wields expertly a blood-letting awl. But a herbalist, even if called *Ɖaga*, remains *Ɖaga-tshubya*, a doctor without horns (power), because he does not divine; he can prescribe for recognized diseases, but he cannot diagnose in other cases for which the divining dice are necessary. From our point of view, the herbalist diagnoses and prescribes along scientific lines; to the Native he is a novice unable to deal with witches or the more serious diseases.

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CHAPTER XIII

THE ROLE OF THE ANCESTORS

Ancestral caprices and complaints and rites to appease them—the universe of the ancestors a replica of the everyday world—relations of magic, morality, and religion—possession by spirits as a religion and socio-psychological phenomenon.

NATURE spirits and hero-gods have no place in the Lovedu scheme of things. There is, however, Khuzwane, the creator, who made all things, including men, and left his footprints on certain rocks in the north when these rocks were new and soft. But no one knows what has happened to him and no one ever thinks of him. The gods of the Lovedu are their ancestors, deceased fathers and mothers who guard one in death as they did in life. Each family has its own ancestors, and religious observances are thus peculiarly a family concern.

Ancestors have various attributes. They are one's protectors and no harm can befall one unless they, the ancestors, are neglectful. Witches, powerful as they are, can neither enter the village nor cause sickness without their connivance; hence the procedure in divination, even in the clearest case of witchcraft, of inquiring whether the spirits should be appeased. Disease cannot enter nor epidemics break out if only the ancestors are watchful enough and well-disposed. Again and again one finds this idea expressed in prayers; 'Protect us from epidemics [winds]', they say; while the queen in a prayer at her harvest ceremony put it even more positively: 'As regards life, we have been very well, but now we are being killed by that epidemic which you have allowed to come', referring to smallpox. There can be no success without the co-operation of the ancestors. Medicine cannot help nor doctors heal if the ancestors are not with one. This idea, reminiscent of our 'By the will of God', is expressed in the phrase, 'We do not say our doctor, [will heal]; we say our doctor and the ancestors'. It appears also in a prayer we heard on behalf of an absent son working in town, when a goat, dedicated to his grandmother (father's mother), who had made him ill two years before, was being given the new corn: 'Here is the child; here he is, mother. We ask that you let him be happy and cool (give him health). Tell all the other spirits [certain names mentioned], and we who remain, *we say our thing with the gods.*'

The phrase '*vadimo lalane*' (spirits, sleep) which rounds off so many prayers, and the constant fear of waking up (*hu dzosa*) the ancestors, causing them to stand (*hu ema*) and cause trouble, appear at first as a peculiar contradiction, as though people do not wish their gods to be watchful. The term *lala* is, however, idiomatic, expressing peace, things being as they should be, as in the phrase, '*Ha va mulao; shago la lala*' (There was order; the country slept), implying that the rains were good and all was well; while *hu dzosa* in this sense means stirring to anger rather than waking up from sleep.

The ancestors are responsible for the fertility of the crops. True, nothing could grow without rain, for which the queen is responsible and

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769 241 782 which royal ancestors only can withhold; differences in the harvest between one area and another are often attributed to fights between the witches of the two areas, and even variations in yield between one man's field and his neighbour's may be due to witchcraft. Yet one finds in prayers many a request for a good harvest, even though there are no special ceremonies devoted to this end. A man pouring a libation for a sick child said among other things, 'Give us corn; when we plough let us also reap. Why are you stinting us?' And it is significant that the only regular religious observance is the harvest offering of beer made of each year's new corn in villages where there are shrines or dedicated animals.

[764] When any one dies, there is thought to be danger that the fertility of the crops will depart with him or her. Hence, when a gourd of seeds of every kind is placed in the grave together with a firebrand and calabash of water for the journey, some of the seeds are scattered over the body with the words, 'Do not depart with all the corn and seeds,' and very often the grain belonging to the deceased is treated with medicine in order that it may remain fertile.

769 782 Above all, the ancestors complain, a fact which lies at the basis of Lovedu religion, for by far the greater proportion of religious rites are those performed in response to ancestral complaints. One might at first think it strange that the gods, in life just ordinary, well-disposed people, should in death be so liable to bring trouble upon their kin. Sometimes it is thought to be a sign of love: when Masilu's grandmother had made him ill because she wanted a goat dedicated to her, his mother said, 'No wonder his *gogo* seized him. She was always so fond of him.' But chiefly it is the nature of ancestors to complain; as the Lovedu phrase it, 'When people sleep (i.e. are dead), they ought to complain' (*Hɛ vathu va khi lala fase va swanɛdɛ hu velcala*). When there is illness, they are, as it is phrased, 'seen in the divining bones'; it is they who sometimes 'hold' the woman experiencing difficult childbirth, and sometimes, but far less than among the Nguni, their complaints cause dreams. Our close friend [787] Walter, coming to seek work in Johannesburg, dreamt disturbing dreams of his dead father, who appeared to say that he was needed at home. He thereupon returned home and, when he arrived, his mother took him to a doctor, whose bones declared that the dead father was annoyed at not having been told of the journey to town and had to be appeased (*hu phasa*). Walter was well educated, but he had failed in his last examination and felt doubly frustrated. He had great ambitions of reforming the political system of the tribe, from which his education had divorced him, and in town he was dissatisfied that nothing was open to him but the unskilled work of his uneducated compatriots.

769 782 778 An ancestor may complain about the way he has been buried, and if he has died far from home, may demand to be 'brought back home' in a ceremony in which, besides the dedication of a beast or goat, a goat is killed and eaten, its bones being buried as though it were a person. But this 'bringing home', involving the making of a shrine, applies only to those dying at a distance and does not resemble the 'bringing home' of the Zulu, among whom it is part of death ceremonial. At times the gods complain of neglect. But in the majority of cases no definite reason for

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the complaint is either given or required; and frequently no special spirit is mentioned. It is enough to know the cause of the trouble and what rite is necessary to placate the gods. Even complaints of neglect are usually put positively: 'He complains that you should give him (his shrine) a libation'. The ancestors desire mainly to be remembered: they want their beads worn, their name revived, a beast or goat dedicated to and named after them. They also like to be told about journeys undertaken or marriages, in much the same way as the living, and to be approached with a libation. Yet, unlike the Nguni, they never complain of being hungry; nor are the gods said to drink the libation or even its spiritual counterpart, but are merely pleased to be given their due. There is no such thing as resting secure because you have done all that is necessary for the gods; there is always some ancestor who can cause trouble, and it is best to wait and see what is wanted. Moreover, the ancestors are wayward; there is no knowing what they may desire. Mambeuli asked to be buried at Khikhuti, but after his death he caused sickness, saying, 'Why did you bury me in the valley in the sun' (instead of in the ancestral grove), and a black sheep had to be sacrificed on his grave. Similarly, Mulogwane, brother of the queen, who in 1934 became a Christian on his death-bed, withheld rain in 1935 because they had buried him in a Christian cemetery. Religious rites among the Lovedu tend, therefore, to be addressed to those spirits that cause trouble and in the absence of illness there may be no rites at all.

Certain objects which were once in the possession of the ancestors are used in religious ceremonial and are thought to have special powers of protection and healing. These objects, consisting of ancient beads of glass or native-worked iron or copper, native-wrought assegais, hoes, axes, iron rods with spiked heads, are handed down in the family and carefully cherished. Very often when a daughter leaves to be married, she is given a few beads to take with her for use when she is ill. Such charms are called *thugula*. Illness caused by an ancestor can generally be cured by a ceremony known as *hu phasa*: a mixture of ground grain and water is poured over beads or other *thugula* objects in the presence of the patient while a prayer, scolding the spirits and asking for health, is made. The beads are then worn by the patient till he recovers. After *hu phasa* on beads for any one, he may wear them at any time with protective results, and small children generally wear many old beads. Maseriba called hers 'my hospital' (*spitele aa ga*) to illustrate their powers to us in European idiom. Patzere says, if he does not wear the crocodile bone that was his father's, he gets ill or dreams much of dead people. Association with the ancestors, not anything inherent in these objects, gives them their powers, for we have seen an old Boer gun brought out as a *thugula* at an offering. Yet for a charm to heal it is not essential that it should have been in the possession either of the complaining ancestor himself or of his family. Sometimes the gods, through the dice, mention beads or other objects not known in the family at all. It is then concluded that they have been lost and steps are taken to procure them from some one else or from the queen, who has many. Then when they pray, it will be mentioned: 'We are replacing the lost bead.'

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769 782 825 Offerings may be poured on the ground or on *thugula* objects. Sometimes, however, the ancestors desire a shrine or a dedicated animal. The queen herself and some others have dedicated cattle, male or female, according to the spirit represented; a few families have sheep, while the majority have goats. Fowls are neither dedicated nor killed for the gods. But we have one instance of a dedicated snake, that in the Reltla family, to which in 1939, at their burial grounds in the depths of the forest, libations were offered when the *vyali* initiation began in that district; the conception is wholly alien to the Lovedu, though the Reltla have been so long linked with, as to be indistinguishable from, them; and the snake, said to whistle, is described as like that dreaded monster, the 'mountain snake' which is often thought of as a mamba but strikes terror like the omen it is. The use of these different animals is traditional in, and bears no relation to the wealth of, the families concerned; some have a dedicated animal, others merely a shrine, while many have both. The dedicated animal receives the name of an ancestor, father or grandfather in the case of the head of the lineage, or of any complaining spirit that has demanded such *thugula*, and it is believed that his spirit (*muya*) has entered into it. Some dedicated animals are credited with abnormal powers: Mamujaji's agitation one day, while being driven to the dip, correctly presaged unpleasantness with the dip inspector; Malegudu is the fiercest bull in the land, like the warrior whom he represents. Though some people unceremoniously pour beer-offerings down the throat of dedicated animals, it is generally claimed that, unlike ordinary animals, they readily drink beer, but the claim is contradicted by the mealie leaves put over the beer to coax the animal to drink. In 1938, when Malegudu, called from the herd to drink the harvest beer, remained immovable, every one was afraid to approach him, but it was considered sufficient to throw the beer over him from a distance, so that by licking himself he might partake of the offering.

778 [824] Shrines, which are to be found generally on the left-hand side of the entrance to the sleeping hut of the chief wife, vary in appearance and contents. A shrine may consist of a small mound of earth, containing the bones of a sacrificial goat; it may be a sacred plant or tree, usually *ʃiʃigwani* (*Hypoxis villosa*) or *leʒmɛ* (*Hæmanthus sp.*) and *muʃabu* (*Ficus capensis*), a black river stone, a long stick, or even a piece of a certain kind of ant heap (*khiʃhoni*). The queen's own shrine is a mound under which are buried the bones of a goat slaughtered some twenty years ago when it was set up. Mashishimali's shrine contains no bones, but consists of a *ʃiʃigwani* lily and a river stone, both visible above ground. Ramatiti has three shrines and one dedicated goat, all of which have arisen out of illness caused by ancestral complaints. Of the first, the shrine of his father, nothing is visible above ground; it consists of a buried piece of ant-heap, used instead of a goat because Ramatiti is not the chief son, who should have the dedicated animal, and a black river stone which keeps the spirit cool and appeased (lying down), as well as the three plant substances [824] *muʃɛra*, *lɛʒogo* (*Alipedia sp.?*), *vuleʒaja*, which are placed in most shrines to make the ancestors 'forget'. The other two are mounds containing the bones and heads of goats, one representing his mother, the other, like the live goat, his mother's brother, his wife's father.

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The immortality of Lovedu spirits is of practical importance in their working religion only for two or three generations back; beyond this they are hardly remembered. The spirits that cause most trouble are one's grandparents, and in religious practices these tend to be the most important. Both sides of the family, that of one's father and that of one's mother, are equally important; both cause trouble and both must be placated; and this is an accurate reflection of the social structure, of relationship reckoned bilaterally, and of the cattle links. The configuration of the ancestral world is no different from that of the ordinary world. It is therefore not surprising that all four lines of grandparents are recognized. Even when a spirit in the line of the father's father is being placated, the line of the father's mother may also be mentioned: thus we have heard an officiator in a *phasa* ceremony calling, not only upon his father's younger brother, the spirit troubling its granddaughter, but also upon his father, father's father, elder brother, mother, and elder sister. Dedicated goats to male ancestors tend to, but do not always, run in the male line. As in social or political arrangements, the male line may recede before the female; it may even, as far as ancestors are concerned, become almost completely obliterated. In the Matsui family, for instance, the father's father's line is neglected, except for *ku phasa*, when they cause illness, but the father's mother's line is all important. It is to the latter that the beast Mamujaji is dedicated and it is to this beast that the new corn is given every year. This emphasis reflects the links with the queen which the family wishes to emphasize, for Mamujaji, the ancestor of the father's mother, was mother of Mujaji I.

The coherence of the social and the ancestral worlds is seen even in regard to the implications of the *munywalo* system. Biological relationship not socially recognized is of no importance in religion, and not only can the biological father of an illegitimate child or his relatives never cause illness, for the 'gods follow the cattle' (*modimo e tsotla dikhomu*), but the queen's ancestors cause illness in children of any of her wives, whoever their father may be, and it is the queen who is often required to *phasa* for them. In the gathering together in worship of all relatives the social system is similarly reflected. When after many deaths or much illness in a family the dice order a *mukhoro*, a religious gathering of all relatives, not only the lineage but relatives on both sides (*mulozo*), including those by marriage, meet. Each brings a basket of corn as a contribution towards the beer for the occasion, but a relative who is on bad terms with the others will, of course, simply stay away.

Not only the scheme of institutionalized social relations, but the nature of these relations in ordinary life is reflected in religion. The fact that the gods were known in life is largely responsible for many of the outstanding characteristics of Lovedu worship. We must not expect a behaviour pattern of humble worshipper to omnipotent god. Awe and trepidation characterise the attitude to the mysterical secrets of great *digoma*, but they constitute a category poles apart from the ancestors and *dithugula*. People pray to ancestors as man to man, scolding them or reminding them of their duties to their children. The following prayer, uttered when Pheduli was brought home, is typical: 'We say, here is your corn, Pheduli.

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769 What sort of person are you who do not live happily with your people?
182 To-day all your children have gathered here. They have come to see you
781 given corn. And to-morrow, when they depart, don't let there be a single one who remains troubled. Don't seize them, they are your children.' The difference between a spirit and the very old is not great, for
886 an aged person is sometimes even referred to as 'our god' (*mudimo wazu*) and his displeasure during life may be 'seen in the dice' as the cause of illness or, after death, be avenged upon those who have angered him. An old wife of the queen, who had long been ailing, sent her a message saying, 'Unless you give me ox liver, I'll never die, but keep on troubling people.' The queen, notoriously averse from slaughtering cattle for meat, nevertheless complied with this request, because it came from so old a woman.

769 Living relatives, even if not old, but because of the social implications
182 of their close relationship, may by conscious or even unconscious
753 (repressed) displeasure in their hearts cause illness. When Ramatiti's
766 daughter was about to set out for her new home, her mother, quite unexpectedly and without the previous knowledge of any one, took some water and squirted (*hu phasa*) it on the ground near the shrine, saying, 'You people of ours, I myself, mother of the girl, *phasa* lest they say I remained with a dissatisfied heart.' By intimating that she had no grievance, she tried to safeguard herself from being, at some future date, found in the dice as the cause of her daughter's barrenness. Unconscious grievances are recognized as working like our so-called repressed complexes. If the dice assign an illness, say barrenness, to a person who has no conscious complaint, he must nevertheless *phasa*, but his prayer will be, 'Don't say when you [the ancestors] seize her womb that it is I' (meaning, do not attribute your being 'stirred up' to dissatisfaction in my heart); or he may say, 'If it is I, let the child be well' (meaning, as I am unaware that I am the cause and do not wish to be, let the child recover). *Hu phasa* in these circumstances recognizes psychological principles that have been clearly formulated only in the twentieth century. If one has a grievance one prays, 'Why is it that you rise up on my account? If it is I, I say, let them give me such-and-such a thing [e.g. beer of reconciliation] and you gods do not "be after" it' (cause further trouble about it).

781 As the gods have human attributes, 'worship' is not characterized by humility or formality. Even at the most important offerings you may find it difficult to catch the words of the officiator amid the talking and laughter of the onlookers. But you will probably hear him say, 'It is not water; truly it is beer', or 'It is not just *mahudu* (light beer); it is real beer', when he pours out flour and water and, you may see, as we once did, how he winks at his friends who smile at the deception. The asking of a favour from the gods with beer is patterned on everyday conceptions of reciprocity. You sometimes definitely state in your prayer, 'We give to you that you may give her [the patient] life.' Religion is cheerful; at the harvest offering the gods come to drink and be merry with you, and the idea of solemn communion with the gods for the uplifting of the soul, found in higher religions, is absent.

771 The relation of religion and morality is too large a subject for discussion here, for both concepts are different from ours. Their relation is not

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girls below the age of puberty are sent to draw water for the *mufugo* which the queen's rain-doctor prepares for the occasion, and after a day or two, when the medicine froths up (*hu púkula*), boys are sent with a horn of *mufugo* and a brush of *khadi* creeper (*Adenia gummifera*) to every village in the land. First they heat medicine on the fire of the men's courtyard and thereafter on the threshold and hearth of every hut. The ashes are cleared away by an old woman, for so dangerous is the medicine used that any man, woman, or child entering the hut before it has been smeared with dung will *khuma* and be unable to have children. A new fire is kindled in the men's courtyard, whence each woman fetches a brand for her own hut, for it is taboo to kindle a fire from any other. In return for her firebrand, each woman gives the men stamped mealies or groundnuts, which they eat in the *khoro*. Each married man in turn must give something to the boys who have brought *mufugo*, usually 1*s*. or a fowl (in the old days an arrow or mealies), but often also tobacco or other gifts for, as '*mufugo* does not choose' (*mufugo a u khetha*), anything may be given. Each boy must give 1*s*. or a fowl to the keeper of *mufugo*, keeping the rest as a reward for his labours. It is taboo to work in the fields on the day after *mufugo*. In 1927 some boys, too lazy to fetch the medicine, took matters into their own hands and made a mixture of ash and water, which they used in their rounds. They were discovered and made to pay five head of cattle each and the ceremony had to be performed again.

When the divining bones diagnose drought as due to ancestors, steps have to be taken for a sacrifice at an ancestral grave. Any one of the close relatives of the queen can cause drought: sometimes it is the queen's mother *Leakhali*, buried at Khada; sometimes it is Mugodo's sister, buried at Mudzinoni; in 1925–6 it was Mulogwane, the queen's brother, who complained that he was buried in the Christian cemetery, instead of in the shade of the forest. A sacrifice for rain will take place only after it has become clear that, in spite of steps taken to *loea* the queen by means of money or dancing, she fails by her ordinary methods to cause the rain to fall.

January, 1938, was hot and dry. Several headmen had been to *loea*, but no rain fell. Important district heads and councillors thus began to 'travel about, having the bones thrown', to discover the cause, while the queen herself also sent messengers to various well-known diviners. The reply came, 'Seek ye a black sheep. Go with it to show your care for the spirits and you shall see that it will rain nicely.' As is so often the case, no indication was given of the cause of their complaint; the suggestion as to the practical measures to be taken and the identity of the troublesome spirits were quite sufficient. The queen, however, remained inactive; it was not for her to take the initiative till her people humbly begged her to do so. On February 11th three of the most important men at the capital approached her, saying, 'People are crying. Help us.' Thereupon she impatiently replied, 'People tire me. The year was well established, but they have "weakened" (*hu figchela*) it. They want me to be troubled.' She implied that she had safeguarded the year, but that the people themselves, by breaking rain taboos and by their evil works and witchcraft, had undermined that safeguard. When the councillors continued

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A sister's cattle-providing capacity gives her a pivotal position in the social structure. It is the cattle accruing from her marriage that 'build' a house for her brother and 'beget' children to her lineage. Over this house she has rights that can be legally and mystically enforced. She settles disputes in it, and distributes its possessions when its owner dies. She invokes the gods on its behalf; no one, not even her brother himself (the husband and head of the house), can ill treat the wife of this house without having to reckon with her, and any breach of the marriage relationship is void without her consent. It will be evident that no judgement of the Lovedu courts in regard to a marriage has much chance of being carried out without the assistance and co-operation of this sister. For this and other reasons women are prominent as intermediaries and conciliators in the society. It should also be no surprise that any woman may marry wives, whose children call her 'father'; that many women are kraal heads and some of them the most important districts heads in the country. As chief officiators in offerings and sacrifice women play an important role also in religion.

Structurally the agnatic group, of which the cattle-linked brother is a member, is a minor lineage three to four generations deep, which supplies wives to the lineage into which his sister has married. The obligations of providing wives on the one hand and returning cattle on the other cannot, indeed, be enforced beyond the actual houses concerned and their lineal descendants, but the relationships of reciprocity and the behaviour patterns of helpfulness on the part of the wife-receivers, and of honouring and periodically bringing beer on the part of the wife-providers, are usually extended beyond these houses to the whole minor lineage and, where the relationships have been long established and are kept alive as part of the political structure, they may embrace major lineages five to eight generations deep. The wife-providers are called either maternal uncles (*vamalume*), since a man's mother's brother (*malume*) is ideally his wife's father, or grandparents (*vamakhulu*), since his maternal grandfather is the male representative of his wife's agnatic group (being her paternal grandfather). Conversely, the wife-receivers are called either sons-in-law (*vatsezi*), because the lineage into which a man's sister marries is also the lineage into which his daughter marries, or *vaſukulu* (grandchildren or sister's sons), a man's sister's son being the same person as his daughter's husband or his father's granddaughter. It should be noted that, even though these wife-providing and wife-receiving lineages are related through marriage, the relationships between them are not merely affinal. The wife-providers and wife-receivers are not merely brothers-in-law but also cognates—wife-providers being maternal uncles and grandparents, and wife-receivers being children of paternal aunts, sisters, or daughters. A man's maternal kin are also his affines, while the maternal kin and sororal affines are merged with the paternal kin.

This merging of various types of kin is perhaps the reason why all four lines of kin—father's father, father's mother, mother's father, mother's

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753 mother—are important in ancestor worship. Any of these forebears may seize
769 a man and make him ill, require a dedicated animal or a shrine in his or her honour, and, in fact, one may find shrines in one village or kraal to kin of several different lineages. In practice the mother's mother is an ancestor who most often causes illness in her grandchildren because of her great love for them.

621 The core of a large kraal or village (20 to 80 huts) is usually the minor lineage, but there are always also affines and cognates, quite apart from the spouses of agnatic members of the lineage who themselves are usually cognates. In kraal matters it is by virtue of being not an agnate, but a member of the kindred (*mulɔgɔ*), that a man has a voice. The core of the district is
602 sometimes also the lineage of the district head, but the lineage is not a
634 political group and the influence and authority of its head are not a function of his relationship, agnatic or other, to the people living in the district.
643 Districts, of which there are 140—with an average area of 1 square mile and population of 250—are linked to the queen on the pattern of cattle and wife exchanges. Districts are either held by descendants of one of the original agnatic lineages of the nuclear ruling group, or they have been allocated to *vaṭanoni* (wives of the queen) or to immigrant alien groups. They all send wives to the queen, who thereby becomes their son-in-law (*muḍuhulu*) and, by allocating them to other district heads and to royal relatives, she becomes parent-in-law (*vamakhulu*) to the latter. Those lineages of the royal nuclear group who send wives to the queen are both 'brothers' (agnates) and relatives-in-law (affines) to her. The use of the mechanism of the social system to align groups into reciprocal relations forges a great network of ties radiating from the queen to all strategic points in the society. It was in this way that large numbers of alien refugees were incorporated into the tribe and became related to one another. Payments of tribute and services to the queen are thus looked upon as the fulfilment of kinship obligations, in return for which the queen not only gives land and protection from enemies, but also transforms the clouds into rain and so frees men from fear and uncertainty.

602 Thus the kinship ties that bind subjects to the rain queen are interlocked
641 with the values and institutions supporting her divinity. The homage in wives that is paid to her for giving men the blessings of rain, is also the
643 means of forging the network of kinship ties. The kinship ties, again, convert political tribute and services due to the queen into morally sanctioned ceremonial exchanges between relatives-in-law; and just as there is no need for military virtues and military organization to deter enemies, since the queen, merely by withholding rain, can secure the defeat of the foe, so also there is no need to rely upon force to secure the willing allegiance of subjects who are treated to the beer that they bring, ostensibly as tribute to a sovereign but in reality as gifts from parents-in-law.

643 The queen is accordingly the pivot of the nodal institutions of the society.
772 The benevolent forces in the universe are, as the Lovedu sometimes
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But the whole cycle of myths merely emphasizes in very general terms the importance of rain-making as a prerequisite of the claim to chieftainship and for the well-being of the tribe; it does not concern itself with justifying the validity of the various institutional arrangements that are the main support of the beliefs and values of the queen's mystical credentials.

Conception of the Natural Order

The Lovedu do not oppose man and nature. There are no explicit formulations of the nature of the universe, but a natural order inexorably going its ordained way is implicitly rejected in their conceptions. The assumption is that cosmic forces are controllable and, in fact, controlled at every turn by man for his own benefit. Since nature is of interest and importance only so far as it is or can be used by society, there is no such conception as a world order unrelated to man's activities and desires. The order of nature is a controlled one. There are various ways in which man is able to use and control powers in nature—by *vuŋaga* (the evil aspect of which is *vulsi*), i.e. by the use of power concentrated in certain persons and objects; by appeal to the ancestor-gods upon whom are projected the powers that the child experiences in relation to its parents; through the mysteries of the *diŋoma* which are associated with initiation and the fertility cult; and through the divinity of the queen whose concern it is to control nature in the interests of the tribe as a whole. This idea of the control of nature by the chief on behalf of the tribe is not unique; it is common among the Bantu tribes of South Africa. But the Lovedu emphasis is on the divine origin and special affinity with nature of the queen herself, whereas in tribes such as the Zulu and Tsonga, where the mystical relation of the chief to his people and his powers over nature have to be achieved by magical strengthening on his accession and to be renewed periodically, it is largely by means of the magic of the royal regalia that the chief is able to exercise control. Among all, including Lovedu, one of the most important factors in the powers and position of the chief is the fact that he is the living representative of the long line of royal ancestors (tribal gods). There is considerable overlapping of these four categories among the Lovedu. Thus ancestors are kept satisfied and happy by a charm placed in their shrine; the queen controls rain not only through her divinity but also by means of medicines and charms and appeals to her ancestors who can prevent her from making rain. Let us consider these means for the control of nature in greater detail.

Vuŋaga (skilled use of power concentrated in persons and objects)

The forces of nature may be manipulated through properties intrinsic in various objects, animate and inanimate. The substances in which these attributes or powers (*maŋda*) reside are mainly *melimo* (medicines) or *mere* (plants). But the term medicines in this context has a wider connotation than the parallel term among us; it includes both medicine and magic, and is a medico-magical conceptual category which to the Lovedu is quite distinct

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from the supernatural. While anyone who knows a cure for an ailment is manipulating the forces of nature and using *vuŋaga*, there are doctors who, by virtue of long training, know many medicines, have learnt how to divine and have been imbued with additional perspicacity and powers as a result of a special initiation. Medicine functions by virtue of the properties, actual or ascribed, of matter; the principles underlying the operation of medicines assume mechanical cause and effect and even the divining bones are read according to rule.

There are, however, two types of doctor who fall into a different category: the *lelɔpɔ* doctor, directly possessed and guided by an ancestor spirit, who largely confines his activities to curing possessed people, and the *muŋɔme* or 'smeller-out' who is generally a foreigner. People using the forces of nature for evil purposes are *valɔi* (witches and sorcerers) and are dealt with in another context. *Vuŋaga*, it will be seen, is the use of impersonal power inherent in matter, which is extracted by the expert (*ŋaga*) and applied in the interests of the health and well-being of men; it is also the exercise of personal qualities or skills, either inherited or acquired through spirit possession or guidance.

Ancestors

Ancestors can influence for good and evil the fortunes only of their own descendants, who in the case of the chief's ancestors are taken to include the whole tribe. Their control over the forces of nature is not explicitly formulated; and what is expressly stated is not always confirmed in Lovedu religious practices. The ancestors are clearly conceived to exercise an overall control. A man will always assert that no harm or illness can befall him if his ancestors are watchful enough, for they have power to ward off all evil and misfortune. It is said that even witches cannot, without the will of the ancestors, enter a village or deliver the last fatal blow that kills a man. But in practice the will of the ancestors either is not interposed, for no ascertainable reason, or is ineffective to ward off attacks. If some great sorrow overtakes a man, it is said that 'his ancestors have had an accident' implying that he has been temporarily deprived of their protection and is at the mercy of his enemies. Even medicines are said to be ineffective without the co-operation of one's ancestors, the conception being not merely that their goodwill is essential but also that *vuŋaga* belongs to the ancestors. In fact, however, the ineffectiveness of medicines is never in any concrete case attributed to the lack of such co-operation.

Ancestors are appealed to and thanked for good crops, fertility, plenty, and all manner of good fortune and success. The desire to be remembered and given tendance is attributed to them, and they may themselves cause harm and sickness to descendants who neglect them; but somewhat inconsistently a man may with impunity neglect them for many years and give them tendance only when misfortune overtakes him. Ancestors may be approached and propitiated or thanked by means of offerings and prayer

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and the use of *dithugula*, objects such as beads which have once been in their possession; but they can also be constrained by medicine or the properties of matter.

Ancestors are capricious: their complaints as seen in the divining bones are usually about being neglected; but they may cause illness to those they love most in order to receive recognition, have their name perpetuated, or their beads worn. They are said to 'hold' the woman experiencing difficult labour, to afflict children with sore eyes, and even to prevent the queen from making rain. Their complaints need imply no omission or neglect on the part of the afflicted descendant, but merely some special desire that could not have been anticipated. The degree of either neglect or tendance bears no relation to their satisfaction or dissatisfaction, since the ascription of misfortune to the ancestors is always *ex post facto*: hence the paradox that a family that is assiduous in its tendance of the ancestors may suffer more ill health and misfortune than one that has neglected the ancestors for a long time.

Dithugula are instrumental in controlling nature not only indirectly through the ancestors but also directly by virtue of the substances used in them. A *thugula* may be a shrine to an ancestor (male or female), an animal dedicated to him, old beads or objects of iron to which, owing to their having once been in his possession, power to influence him is attributed. But a *thugula* may also be any charm of herbs concocted by a doctor and worn for protective purposes. The queen's rain-medicines are *dithugula*. The most important religious ceremony of the year, the annual offering of beer to ancestors as thanksgiving for the harvest, is also called *thugula*. *Dithugula* thus constitute a category of objects, usually closely associated with the ancestors (though they may be made by a doctor), through which they may be approached, and which have special virtue particularly to give health and protection against ills and epidemics.

Dithugula are found in every lineage which, through its shrines, dedicated animals, and charms, secures the general welfare of its members. The queen's *dithugula*, her rain-medicines, sacred objects, and shrines through which she intercedes with the royal ancestors, are the ultimate symbols of her power and the safeguards of the welfare of the country; and just as certain medicines (*diphaba*), which are used in shrines or offerings to make the ancestors forget their complaints, are pegged round the village by the paternal aunt or sister of its head to protect it against witches, so also the queen may *thugula* the whole country by sending boys to peg medicated sticks on its boundaries as a protection against evil, particularly epidemics that might threaten it from outside.

The queen's control

The basis of the queen's control over nature is her divinity. So bound up is she with nature that her very emotions affect the rain. The complex of royal institutions includes the conceptions that she must be without

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the initiates. It is something mystically powerful which transforms boys into men. But if the initiation as a whole is a *gɔma*, so also are the secret formulae, objects, and mummeries that form part of the ceremony.

With the *vyali-vuhwera* fertility cult, which is at the same time also an initiation for girls (*vyali*) and for boys (*vuhwera*), are associated many *digɔma*, in the form of masked figures in costumes made of grass, reeds, and leaves, or plays and mummeries emphasizing the value of certain foods. But the greatest of all is *Khiudogane*, Bird of Muhale (the royal founder ancestor), ruling spirit of the *vyali*, which is believed to emerge from a pool on moonlight nights, leave mists behind it when it departs, and upon which much of the ritual centres. It is the link between two aspects of sacred forces, that conceived as mysterious, fearful, approached only through elaborate symbolism, and that represented by ancestors and directly approached. For the bird is both a great *gɔma* and a symbol of the royal ancestors.

Revived in 1938, after an interval of twenty years, the *vyali-vuhwera* with its great *digɔma* is thought to promote abundance and rain, the welfare and happiness of the people. While it lasts it is the main national interest to which all energies are bent and all activities subordinated. Marriages are held up, the normal judicial machinery is at a standstill, and anything that might compete with the ceremonial is interdicted. Since initiates spend only early mornings and evenings at the secret enclosure, they sleep at home and are able to carry on essential domestic tasks for the greater part of the day.

The sacred drums of the tribe (*digɔma*), four in number, are kept and cared for by the people of Ravothata, a lineage that came from Phalaborwa, where the drum cult is more intimately connected with the chief than among the Lovedu. These drums, which are said to contain under the resonator a human skull and, in the case of the smallest, the facial skin of a councillor, are mystically linked with the life of the queen and the welfare of the tribe. The heir sits on the smallest drum while being taught the rain ritual and it must accompany the queen if ever she is forced to flee from her enemies. The sacred drums are spoken of as *vadimo* (gods) as well as *digɔma*, and they were beaten twice a year in the old days in a ceremony known as *gɔmana* as an appeal to the ancestors for rain and to thank them for the harvest. The latter took the form of an initiation into the secrets of the cult at which boys were given certain cuts on their faces.

Associated with the sacred drums and also classed as *digɔma* are the *zwidajani*, the weird whistling ancestor spirits of the royal lineage who come to earth in the guise, it is said, of half-men with one eye, one arm, and one leg, to take part in the rites connected with the sacred drums and in the annual harvest *thugula* ceremony in all royal and certain other lineages. They are, in fact, as is known to those initiated in the *gɔmana*, old men masquerading as spirits. They appear in the bush near the village and join in the singing of *letugu* songs which are sung, on these occasions, through specially constructed secret whistles.

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An omen or bane (*lesola*) presages death or disaster, but it may itself be the cause of the evil that follows. An owl hooting outside a hut, cats crying plaintively (not caterwauling) at night, presage disaster, for cats have uncanny insight; a mountain snake can be a *lesola*, and so can a *leshɛga*, i.e. a person whose teeth have appeared in the wrong order. A person will *ʈola* another, i.e. cause misfortune or death to descend upon a member of the latter's family, by swearing badly at him, especially if the words are out of all proportion to the offence or provocation.

These concepts of natural luck, accident, and omens are thus also linked with human relationships. Good relations with near relatives may bring you good luck, bad relations, especially with your father or father's sister, bad luck or illness to your children. In fact any man who despises the great, particularly his father, will, it is said, see him in the bones as the cause of his misfortune, especially if the old man dies before a reconciliation has been effected. An old man's scolding or curse is an omen (*vusola*) which portends and causes misfortune to a near relative of the person scolded, and the grievance of one's sister or father's sister, even if it is unconscious, generates a force (*mahava*) which brings illness upon one's children and which can be neutralized only by a religious rite. The exact relation between *mahava* and the ancestors is not very clear. The Lovedu conceive *mahava* as following automatically from the bad relationship between important kin. Yet reconciliation, which removes the source of the *mahava*, is not enough for putting matters right. It is the ancestors that must remove the illness at the request of the aggrieved party.

Witchcraft and Sorcery (Vulɔi)

The evils that have so far been mentioned are either inherent in nature or only vaguely brought into relation with the conduct and relationships between men. Their effects except in a few cases are mild, rarely ending in death. In a completely different category is the greatest and most devastating source of evil *vulɔi* (witchcraft and sorcery), brought about directly by man. *Vulɔi* is, by Lovedu conceptions, always due to the conscious, evil practices of man and is directed at persons he has reason to hate.[1] *Vulɔi* is morally reprehensible, and witches and sorcerers are the arch enemies of society. The concept of *vulɔi* explains evil in terms of the malicious wickedness in men's hearts; it is criminality incarnate in man. The term *vulɔi* covers both witchcraft and sorcery; nevertheless the Lovedu make a clear distinction between witchcraft (*vulɔi vya vusiu*—night witchcraft) and sorcery (*vulɔi vya matsiare*—day witchcraft). The night-witch uses sinister inherited powers which extend beyond the ordinary course of nature. The sorcerer uses the natural, known powers of medicine for anti-social ends. Witchcraft implies possession of power to do evil transcending the under-

[1] Neighbouring Venda and Tsonga conceive the witch as constrained to evil by heredity but unconscious of his own evil acts.

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There is nothing morally wrong in sex or the sex act; not only is sex play among small children connived at, but premarital sex relations are institutionalized. It is only having a child before marriage that is immoral. For adultery restitution must be made, yet a husband who is jealous and watches his wife too closely is despised, and most men and women have extra-marital lovers (*vatavo*). The Lovedu attitude is less strict than that of the Tsonga living among them, for Tsonga married women are expected to be faithful to their husbands, and the compensation and fine for adultery are far higher than among the Lovedu. The Lovedu attitude to sex is matter-of-fact, and obscenity in ritual does not have a prominent role. Sex is handled with moderation: men are warned against the dangers of promiscuity; they learn from their proverb that 'a woman's pubes may break up a family', but passion is not esteemed and sex techniques are undeveloped.

To anyone brought up in the West European culture, where every breach of the moral code is also a sin in the eyes of a God who may punish the wrongdoer either in this life or the hereafter, an arresting aspect of Lovedu culture is that there is only a vague connexion between the ancestor-gods and morality. It has been said for the South Bantu in general, and by more than one authority, that the ancestors 'are the guardians of the moral code, it is they in the first instance who are thought of as visiting on their descendants punishments for some omission or commission'[1] There is among Lovedu a vague idea that failure to carry out one's kinship obligations may bring ancestral displeasure in the form of bad luck, and there may also be some connexion between such displeasure and *mahava*, the force generated by complaints of living kin, which causes illness. But a careful study of Lovedu religious practices over a period of years has brought to light no single instance in which ancestors have complained about anything not immediately concerning their own personal relations with their descendants—their right to tendance, remembrance, and propitiation; the manner of their burial; their desire to be told of major events in the lives of living kin. No ancestor has ever been known to concern himself with the theft, witchcraft, murder, or adultery of any descendant, nor do they trouble about the breaking of taboos which prevent rain and vitally affect the welfare of all. Lovedu ancestors are not upholders of custom in general; they are concerned only with those customs and taboos which affect their own welfare and that of their kin. Even royal ancestors do not concern themselves with the breaking of taboos that lead to drought. This is not a reflection of their carelessness or supineness, for they are quick to complain if, for example their graves are desecrated. On one occasion in 1938, when two men had cut firewood in the bush near the royal burial grounds at Maulwi, the *swidajani* wailed all night to indicate their displeasure. Again when Mologwane, deceased chief councillor and brother of the queen, 'held her

[1] A. W., Hoernlé, 'Religion in Native Life', in *Thinking with Africa*, edited by Milton Stauffer, 1928, p. 100. See also, W. C. Willoughby, *The Soul of the Bantu*, 1928, pp. 381–90.

4: Krige and Krige E-5 (1928-1939)1954
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577 arms' to cause drought in 1938, it was because he had for personal
●769 reasons been buried, at his own express request made before death, in the Christian cemetery instead of in the damp shade of the forest, like his forebears.

577 It would appear that this lack of interest on the part of the ancestral gods
593 in the morality of their descendants is in conformity with the pattern of the relationship between living parents and their children. Parental protection and care are given not by virtue of the morality or conduct of their children; it is one of the imperatives of the kinship bond. A parent loves his wayward, bad son as much as, if not more than, his well-behaved, virtuous children. It is only a bad personal relationship between parent and child or neglect of filial duty that could cause a parent to withhold his protection.

626 Sanctions for right behaviour are, first and most important, the pressure of public opinion and of the reciprocal arrangements of the political and social structure. A man conforms to the code because of his self-esteem and the high regard he has for his reputation for fairness and moderation, wisdom and ability to get on with others, generosity and helpfulness, not merely among his kin but in the wider circle of his friends and neighbours. The next important group of sanctions are the pain and misfortune that may follow if those he has injured use vengeance magic or resort to witchcraft and sorcery against him. Certain types of conduct carry their own automatic ritual sanctions which form a third group of deterrents, even though there is little pressure of public opinion against the conduct and no necessary or immediate consequence to the person himself, unless indeed he is repeatedly guilty. Finally, duties towards the ancestors, such as tendance and
626 recognition, have the religious sanctions of ancestral anger in the form of
769 illness, or misfortune. Ancestral displeasure can also be inferred as a sanction acting indefinitely and over a vague area of conduct to reinforce men's obligations to kin, generally those kin who stand to them in a relation of some authority. This inference may be made, not because ancestors ever directly cause misfortune to a descendant for breaches of correct behaviour to kin as they do in the case of neglect of themselves, but because bad luck may be attributed to failure in one's duties to kin.

[769] Ancestor worship of the Lovedu plays hardly any part, then, in upholding
577 tribal morality. Nor are people so delicately conditioned to the values of the society that they spontaneously react to conscience. Their moral code is not markedly internalized and Lovedu have no sense of 'sin'. Since there are few repressed fears the pressure of which on the mind can be removed by confession and atonement, a sense of guilt seldom moves men, and offenders very rarely repent merely at the dictates of conscience. Their sense of shame is more delicately internalized, but it drives men to make restitution only when the misdeed has been exposed or brought into relation with the system of reciprocities. Lovedu are sensitive mainly to the intangible forces of the social system, and the moral code is upheld mainly

The lineage has no distinguishing name, the term *mokoko* or *loloko* which is in common use referring to the group of agnates as well as to the relatives on the mother's side of the family. The lineage segment of four to five generations tracing its descent from a common male ancestor (grandfather of the adult males) shares a common major shrine and occasionally meets at the harvest thanksgiving or when a *mokhobo* (a gathering of the descendants of a particular common ancestor) is indicated by the diviner as the wish of a troublesome spirit. Such a group of agnates of four to five generations in depth tends to be concentrated in the same locality and in many cases may be found in the same homestead (*motse*). As neighbours and relatives they share in many common activities such as helping in each other's work-parties, taking part in girls' puberty ceremonies, consulting each other in the marriage of their sons and daughters. Only in the minimal lineage of father and sons are there jural ties. The lineage is not a land-owning unit, has no political functions, is not exogamous, marriage within the lineage being common especially in the Lobedu royal group.

An interesting feature of the Lobedu lineage is the important part played by its women who continue even after marriage to be active in lineage affairs as leaders in religious ritual and as guardians over their brothers' households. The merging of the ancestors on the father's and mother's side of the family which results from preferential marriage with the mother's uterine brother's daughter and the inclusion in ancestor worship of relatives on both sides, which will be described later, also affect the character of the lineage. A religious gathering (*mokhobo*) of the descendants of Sekhobo which I attended showed the lineage segment of five generations in operation and illustrated some of these points. Descendants through both sons and daughters in the line of Sekhobo's chief wife took part in the ceremony and, in addition to calling upon the deceased father and other male ascendants of the head of the lineage, the officiator mentioned by name also the deceased father's uterine sisters and the father's mother. The inclusion of the father's mother was all the more remarkable because this was a gathering of the descendants of Sekhobo and it had been the specific complaint of the troubling ancestor that every year harvest beer was being offered to the spirits on the father's mother's

5:Krige E-5 (1936-1938, 1961-1962) 1964
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side, not to the Sekhobo side. The lineage head's father's mother had been a 'wife' and close relative of the queen, a connection which the Sekhobo family tended to stress socially and which was reflected also in their religion (they had a cow dedicated to and representing her).

The Lobedu lineage, in fact, does not operate as a group to the exclusion of other kin except in informal consultations on matters of marriage or litigation; and the lineage does not emerge in everyday activities as a clearly marked unit. A *mokhobo* such as the above is one of two or three rare occasions when the lineage comes together and in every one of these cases both sons and daughters and their children are invited to be present.

Lobedu homesteads vary in size and composition from a typical minimum of a married man with his mother, wife and children to a group of half-brothers, their mothers, wives, children and grandchildren, still living together after the death of the father. Very often other relatives, such as a widowed sister and her children, a maternal relative or an affine of the head are to be found living in the homestead. But these are the least stable elements and tend to move away in a short time. Though small units continuously hive off, and there is a good deal of change in the small homesteads of more recent immigrants or where a migrant labourer husband has never returned, the Lobedu homestead is on the whole, especially in the case of the chief son and his descendants, a remarkably stable unit. Over a period of thirty years most of the larger homesteads known to me have remained in the same place or been rebuilt a few hundred yards from the old site after the death of their head.

Economy of the Lobedu and their attitude to property

The economy of the Lobedu is a subsistence one based mainly on agriculture and stock-raising supplemented by migrant labour in European areas. Land for cultivation is allotted to individuals by the district head. Once allocated, fields are inherited in the male line and cannot be taken away so long as they are in effective use. Only if a man moves away from the district or is chased out as a witch can he and his family lose

5:Krige E-5 (1936-1938, 1961-1962) 1964
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house should not be used by the son of another house. If this is done (as it sometimes is if one wife has only daughters and another only sons) this immediately establishes a new relationship between half-brother and sister who now become cattle-linked; and the girl whose cattle were used has the right to 'follow the tracks of her cattle' to ask for a daughter-in-law from that 'house'.

A 'house' is never wholly dependent in economic matters on the husband and his lineage. It has other possible sources to exploit. Thus a married woman may, and often does, get fields from her own people to cultivate. The difference between these fields and those given by her husband's people is that the latter are hers as a right and are inherited by her sons; the former she obtains through the goodwill of her blood-kin and on her death they revert back to them unless the children are still young and the fields are needed to feed them. Similarly, though it is the father's duty and responsibility to help his sons to marry and though uterine brothers always help one another, a man who has a married sister very often turns to her husband or to the sister's son for help with cattle to marry a wife. There is a difference, however, between help given by a uterine brother and that given by a relative on the mother's side or an affine—a brother does not expect to be repaid but help from other categories of relative becomes converted into a marriage bond or has to be repaid. The close bond between uterine brothers is indicated in the saying 'uterine brothers share even the head of a locust'.

Each 'house' is distinguished, then, from that of other wives of the husband by its cattle-links and obligations to the wife's side of the family (and later the daughters' husbands' families) and by dependence on ancestors on the mother's (i.e., wife's) side in addition to those on the father's side.

In the case of preferential marriage, too, the 'house' is all-important. Here, in contrast to marriage with strangers where the boy's family initiates negotiations, the first approach is usually made by the girl's people who bring the matter in the first instance to their sister, the woman of the 'house' concerned. Thus, for example, when Dumedi obtained cattle from the marriage of his eldest daughter by his first wife (a mother's brother's daughter) her people approached his mother

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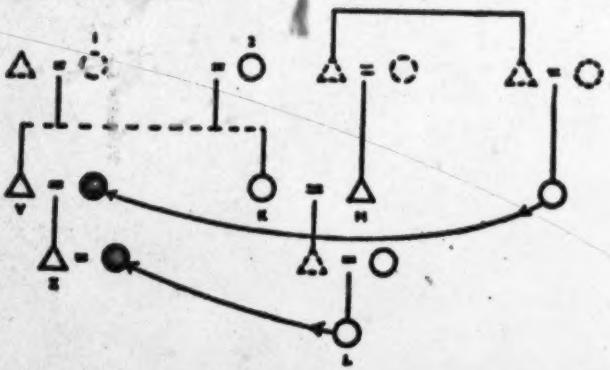

FIG. 7. An arranged marriage (Z to L) to 'knit together' the families of two affines.

growing apart (separating). Here is my son's daughter. Let us knit together the family (*ruka leloko*) else soon we shall be lost to one another'. So Z, the son of V, married L, M's granddaughter. It is interesting to note that while M had married V's half-sister, V had also married a 'sister' of M (M's father's brother's daughter), a case of 'brother-sister' exchange which is very rare among the Lobedu. Z was thus marrying his mother's 'brother's' son's daughter, who was at the same time also his father's half-sister's son's daughter.

Marriage from generation to generation with the uterine brother's daughter has important consequences for ancestor worship. It leads to a merging of ancestors on the father's and mother's sides so that they become *moloko o motes*—one lineage, as the Lobedu phrase it, with identical ancestors in at least two of the four grandparents' families. If a diviner diagnoses an illness as due to someone in a man's father's mother's lineage (which in the case of two generations of mother's brother's daughter marriages will be the same as the mother's father's lineage), then a man's mother, or even his wife, could officiate in a beer-offering in his homestead to the ancestors concerned. The Lobedu call upon and give offerings on different occasions to all four grandparents and other deceased members of their lineages. It is interesting to note that the mother's mother who never becomes by virtue of preferential marriage an ancestor common to both sides of the family and might thus be in danger of being left out, makes herself very much felt in practice. She

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603 is thought to be so deeply attached to her daughter's children
769 that she is always troubling them—wanting them to be named after her, to be given her beads to wear, to have a dedicated
[178] goat or shrine set up. One therefore sometimes finds three or four shrines in a homestead.

The Local Group

621 The local group reflects the balance that is achieved among
602 the Lobedu between agnates on the one hand, and on the other, relatives on the mother's side and affines (one and the same thing depending on the generation from which they are viewed).

621 A random group of thirteen homesteads forming a neighbour-
592 hood, is shown in Figure 8. They are closely linked by agnatic,
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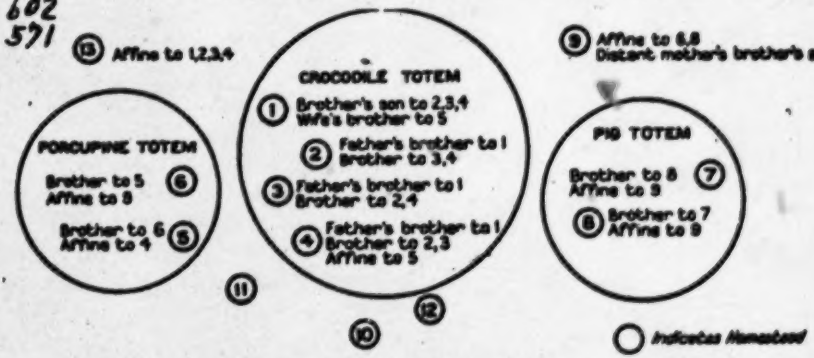

FIG. 8. Agnatic, cognatic and affinal ties in a neighbourhood.

cognatic and affinal ties and share in many economic, ritual and recreational activities.

These homesteads fall into three main clusters of agnates belonging to the Crocodile, Porcupine and Pig totems near which are two homesteads No. 9 and No. 13, which have affinal and cognatic links with these clusters, and three unrelated homesteads, Nos. 10, 11 and 12, the last-named being foreigners, Tsonga, who had little to do with the rest.

The Crocodile cluster (homesteads 1, 2, 3 and 4) had originally been a single homestead which had broken up on the death of the father, head of the district. Other close agnates lived a little further off, not shown on the diagram. This cluster